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World's first spaceport announced

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Contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading	7
Discussion	8
Speaking	9
Homework	10
Answers	11

19 February, 2006

THE ARTICLE

World's first spaceport announced

The era of space tourism ventured a further leap forward for mankind yesterday with the announcement of plans to construct the world's very first spaceport. Space Adventures Ltd. announced in a press release its intentions to develop a commercial spaceport in the United Arab Emirates, with plans to expand globally. Other candidates to accommodate facilities for space travel include Singapore and various yet-to-be-named locations in North America. The initial launch and arrival hub for those wanting to holiday in the heavens looks like being the emirate of Ras-Al-Khaimah, one hour by car from the luxury resort city of Dubai. The Sheikh of Ras-Al-Khaimah has put his full financial and political weight behind ensuring the project is a viable concern.

The press report states that the "total estimated cost of the global spaceport development project is at least US\$265 million and will be funded by various parties". Space Adventures Ltd. is the company that organized orbital flights for all of the world's private space explorers. The UAE's civil aviation authorities have already given their green light for suborbital spaceflights to operate in their air space. Crown Prince Sheikh Saud Bin Saqr Al Qasimi of Ras-Al-Khaimah enthused about being part of such a monumental endeavor, expressing pride in hosting "the site where suborbital commercial space travel will begin and flourish". He added: "We are most excited about spearheading this multi-billion dollar industry." The date of the maiden flight has yet to be unveiled.

WARM-UPS

1. ON THE DOORSTEP: In pairs / groups, talk about what life would be like to have the world's first spaceport on your doorstep. Would you welcome it? Write down five things you would or would not welcome. Share these with your partners. Change partners to gain the overall class consensus.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Space tourism / steps / mankind / adventures / the UAE / Singapore / the heavens / Dubai / explorers / civil aviation / green lights / pride / flourishing / maiden flights

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. AT THE SPACEPORT: You are at the spaceport, waiting for your ten-day holiday in space. Talk to the passenger next to you about your upcoming trip. What do you want to do? Do you have to buy many souvenirs? What do you want to take photos of? Ask each other the normal holiday-in-space questions.

4. SPACE HEADLINES: Talk about these "headlines" of the future. How possible do you think it is for them to come true? Tell each other the stories behind the headlines.

- The U.K. moves into space
- First space war breaks out
- Space overcrowding a problem
- The last human leaves Earth
- World's first MarsPort announced
- Tourists lost in space
- UAE capital relocates to the moon
- Budget space rocket disaster

5. TWO-MINUTE DEBATES: Face your partner and have these fun debates. Students A strongly believe in the first argument; Students B, the second. Change partners often.

- a. The UAE is a poor choice to locate the spaceport. Vs. The UAE is a great choice.
- b. Space travel is still too dangerous. Vs. Crossing the road is dangerous.
- c. Money should be spent on medicines. Vs. Space travel has medical spin-offs.
- d. Space travel means more pollution. Vs. We can put our waste in space bins.
- e. People were never meant to go into space. Vs. Humans are great travelers.
- f. One day we'll all have to live in space. Vs. The earth will always sustain us.
- g. Space travel will be a major industry. Vs. It will create a niche market only.
- h. All humans should go into space once. Vs. No humans should ever leave Earth.

6. ORBIT: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "orbit". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Dubai will be the world's first port to accept goods from space. | T / F |
| b. A city in the UAE has been designated as the world's first spaceport. | T / F |
| c. Anyone can go to heaven if they book a space tour. | T / F |
| d. A Middle-Eastern sheikh is a key financier of the project. | T / F |
| e. One company has put all previous space tourists into orbit. | T / F |
| f. UAE authorities have given the green light for suborbital flights. | T / F |
| g. Space travel will be a multi-trillion-dollar business in the UAE. | T / F |
| h. The maiden commercial space flight will be on July 7, 2007 (7/7/07). | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| a. ventured | doable |
| b. candidates | influence |
| c. hub | inaugural |
| d. weight | contenders |
| e. viable | extolled |
| f. enthused | staggering |
| g. monumental | journeyed |
| h. spearheading | divulged |
| i. maiden | pioneering |
| j. unveiled | nerve center |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| a. ventured a further | commercial space travel will begin |
| b. Other candidates to | financial and political weight behind |
| c. those wanting to | this multi-billion dollar industry |
| d. put his full | accommodate facilities for space travel |
| e. ensuring the project | flight has yet to be unveiled |
| f. will be funded | leap forward for mankind |
| g. civil aviation authorities have | holiday in the heavens |
| h. the site where suborbital | by various parties |
| i. excited about spearheading | is a viable concern |
| j. The date of the maiden | already given their green light |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

World's first spaceport announced

The _____ of space tourism ventured a further leap forward for _____ yesterday with the announcement of plans to construct the world's very first spaceport. Space Adventures Ltd. announced in a press release its _____ to develop a commercial spaceport in the United Arab Emirates, with plans to expand globally. Other _____ to accommodate facilities for space travel include Singapore and various yet-to-be-named locations in North America. The initial launch and arrival _____ for those wanting to holiday in the _____ looks like being the emirate of Ras-Al-Khaimah, one hour by car from the luxury resort city of Dubai. The Sheikh of Ras-Al-Khaimah has put his full financial and political weight _____ ensuring the project is a viable _____.

heavens
intentions
behind
era
candidates
concern
mankind
hub

The press report states that the "total estimated cost of the global spaceport development project is at least US\$265 million and will be funded by various parties". Space Adventures Ltd. is the company that organized _____ flights for all of the world's private space explorers. The UAE's _____ aviation authorities have already given their green light for suborbital spaceflights to operate in their air space. Crown Prince Sheikh Saud Bin Saqr Al Qasimi of Ras-Al-Khaimah _____ about being part of such a monumental _____, expressing pride in _____ "the site where suborbital commercial space travel will begin and _____". He added: "We are most excited about _____ this multi-billion dollar industry." The date of the maiden flight has yet to be _____.

enthused
orbital
hosting
endeavor
spearheading
unveiled
flourish
civil

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

World's first spaceport announced

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AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'green' and 'light'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "SPACEPORT" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about spaceports and space tourism.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| • era | • estimated |
| • intentions | • parties |
| • candidates | • explorers |
| • hub | • monumental |
| • resort | • flourish |
| • viable | • maiden |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Do you think spaceports will play a large part in people's lives in the future?
- c. What environmental problems do you envisage with spaceports?
- d. Would you like to go up in space?
- e. Do you think space travel will ever be affordable for normal people?
- f. What do you think of the choice of the UAE as the location for the first spaceport?
- g. How different do you think a spaceport will be from an airport?
- h. What kind of training do you think people will need to go into space?
- i. Do you think space tourism will be a big industry?
- j. Would you like to live near a spaceport?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What do you think people can do on a trip into space?
- d. What do you think would be the best and worst things about space travel?
- e. What kind of present would you want from somebody who went up into the heavens?
- f. Would you like to work as a flight attendant on space flights?
- g. Do you think space travel would change you in any way?
- h. How long do you think it will be before there are resorts on the moon?
- i. Do you think science fiction always comes true?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

SPACEPORT: In pairs / groups, talk about the pros and cons of a spaceport being built on the outskirts of your town. Use the items in the left hand column to help your conversations.

	PROS	CONS
Noise		
Jobs		
World recognition		
Tourism		
House prices		
Infrastructure		
Your idea _____		

Change partners / groups. Tell each other what your previous partner(s) said.
Decide whether you would be in favor or against a spaceport in your town.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find information about the Ras-Al-Khaimah Spaceport. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. MY DOORSTEP: Make a poster showing the pros and cons of a spaceport being built on your doorstep. Show your poster to your partner(s) in your next class. Did you all include similar pros and cons?

4. NEWS REPORT: You are at RAKIS (Ras-Al-Khaimah Intergalactic Spaceport) for the inaugural commercial space flight. Write a news report of what you witnessed. Which dignitaries were in attendance? How did the event pass? Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. F d. T e. T f. T g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| a. ventured | journeyed |
| b. candidates | contenders |
| c. hub | nerve center |
| d. weight | influence |
| e. viable | doable |
| f. enthused | extolled |
| g. monumental | staggering |
| h. spearheading | pioneering |
| i. maiden | inaugural |
| j. unveiled | divulged |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| a. ventured a further | leap forward for mankind |
| b. Other candidates to | accommodate facilities for space travel |
| c. those wanting to | holiday in the heavens |
| d. put his full | financial and political weight behind |
| e. ensuring the project | is a viable concern |
| f. will be funded | by various parties |
| g. civil aviation authorities have | already given their green light |
| h. the site where suborbital | commercial space travel will begin |
| i. excited about spearheading | this multi-billion dollar industry |
| j. The date of the maiden | flight has yet to be unveiled |

GAP FILL:

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